DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 122 955 PS 008 590

AUTHOR	Caplan, Arna
TITLE	Parent Involvement Handbook.
INSTITUTION	Jefferson County Public Schools, Lakewood, Colo.
PUB DATE	75
NOTE	49p.; For related documents, see PS 008 589 and PS 008 591
AVAILABLE FROM	Jefferson County Public Schools, Early Childhood Education, 1209 Quail Street, Lakewood, Colorado 80215 (Paper, $2.00)
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.83 HC-$2.06 Plus Postage
DESCRIPTORS	Advisory Committees; Differentiated Staffs; Discussion Groups; *Early Childhood Education; *Guides; Home Visits; Newsletters; *Parent Participation; *Preschool Programs; *Program Descriptions; Resource Materials; Volunteers
IDENTIFIERS	Colorado (Jefferson County)

ABSTRACT

This handbook on parent involvement, designed to be used with preschool programs, was developed by the Jefferson County Public Schools in Lakewood, Colorado. Included are: (1) a general statement about parent involvement in an early childhood program, (2) a description of the Jefferson County Early Childhood Program, (3) a description of the differentiated staffing pattern used in the program, (4) a description of parent involvement in the program, specifically parent volunteers, parent discussion groups, parent meetings, home visits, and parent advisory boards, and (5) a discussion of the use of newsletters and printed materials. Also included are lists of suggested materials for early childhood center libraries and for use by staff members. (JMB)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

ED122955
PS 008590

PARENT INVOLVEMENT HANDBOOK

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

2

JEFFERSON COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mr. Alvin J. Meiklejohn, Jr., President
Mrs. Judith Carstens, First Vice President
Mr. Paul R. McEncroe, Second Vice President
Mr. Kirk P. Brady, Secretary
Mr. Lewis E. Stieghorst, Treasurer

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
Dr. Alton W. Cowan

DIVISION OF INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Dr. Arthur Ohanian, Assistant Superintendent
Instructional Planning and Development
Dr. William White, Director
Program Planning and Development
Elizabeth J. Benjamin, Coordinator
Early Childhood Education

JEFFERSON COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
1209 Quail Street
Lakewood, Colorado
80215

This handbook was compiled and written by

Arna Caplan, Intern, Western Interstate Commission on

Higher Education, Boulder, Colorado

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Within the Jefferson County School District there is a strongly held belief that the young child's optimal development can best be achieved by combining an early educational experience with early screening and parental involvement. Participation in the Parent Education and Early Childhood program enriches and expands a child's early learning because his parents and his school become jointly responsive to his needs. Belief in this partnership stems from the realization that parents are the child's first and most effective teachers. The beginning preschooler is testimony to the importance of parents as teachers. The social, cognitive, linguistic and motor competencies with which he comes to school are the result of his interaction with the environment provided by his parents. They have been important models for the child and he has learned much by imitating those who care most for him. We believe that the school should recognize and respect the strength and effectiveness of parents as teachers by providing a program which encourages continued parental involvement in the child's education. Urie Bronfenbrenner concludes, in his review of the research findings of major early childhood programs, that the child benefits most when parents and schools work together.[1] Parents who continue to play an active part in their child's development serve as a "fixative" for what is learned in school.[2]

A formal parent involvement program can have the following benefits for parents and children:

Parents can be aided in providing the most stimulating environment for the child.

Parents can be aided in achieving realistic expectations for their child.

A close parent-school relationship enables the teacher to know more about the child, so that

an individualized program can be planned. When the parent involvement is joined by an early screening process, effective early intervention becomes possible. Many preschool programs have shown that the greatest benefit to the child occurs when attention is focused on the particular needs of each child. When both home and school focus attention on specific ways to help the child, the benefits continue to increase.[3]

A home-school partnership is established at the onset of a child's schooling. Parents whose role is valued will feel more comfortable in their dealings with the school and will continue their involvement into the elementary school years. These parents will gain a better understanding of school programs and of their own child's progress in the program.

Parents can become aware of the resources of the community in the areas of social, medical, and recreational services, as well as educational facilities.

As our society becomes more impersonal and families become more isolated, the parent involvement program can provide opportunities for contact with other adults. Parents can meet their child's needs more successfully when their own needs are met.

The early childhood program provides a feasible plan for joining a parent education component to a preschool and kindergarten program. Once a commitment to parent education and involvement has been established, there are a variety of techniques which may be used to bring parents into the home-school partnership. This handbook will provide you with specific information about our program, including descriptions of the curriculum, staffing patterns, school district support and financial arrangements, as well as the elements of the parent education

component. We have included numerous suggestions for encouraging parent involvement, since education cannot proceed the way it should without their involvement. These reflect the experiences of the staffs at our centers and have stood the test of actual use. The handbook concludes with a list of resources, including those which should be useful when establishing a parent education program.

THE EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM

The uniqueness of each child becomes the basis for planning instruction.

THE EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM

There are two levels to the early childhood program in the Jefferson County Public Schools. The first level deals with the prekindergarten experience and is implemented in twenty-three centers throughout the county. The centers serve approximately 2800 children in biweekly class sessions of 2 1/2 hours each.

The key to the preschool curriculum is individualization, so that the uniqueness of each child becomes the basis for planning instruction. Individualization is achieved through early screening and ongoing diagnosis of the child. The curriculum provides a sequential program within five developmental areas - personal-social, motor, aesthetic, language, and cognitive, expressed in terms of performance objectives. Ample suggestions for activities and resources accompany the objectives. Guidelines are given for creating a classroom environment which includes learning areas and interest centers so that individual, small group and large group activities can take place.[4]

The second level deals with the kindergarten and builds upon the preschool curriculum. The general approach is the same, with an emphasis on individualization, achieved through a suitable classroom environment, varied activities and appropriate group and individual experiences. The growing competency of the child is recognized in an expanded list of performance objectives in the five developmental areas.

THE EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM AND THE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Parents, the community, and the school district join together to provide a preschool experience for large numbers of children within the public school system.

THE EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM AND THE SCHOOL DISTRICT

While the kindergarten year is a well established component of public school, a preschool which is part of the school district's offerings is still a novel arrangement. The Jefferson County Preschool Program has developed an innovative approach to providing a preschool experience for large numbers of children within the public school system. It joins the resources of the parents, the community and the school district to reach more than 33% of the county preschool population in a public preschool program.

The parents contribute to the financial foundation through tuition payments of $17 a month. This pays for the salaries of both head teachers and teacher assistants, materials, equipment, snacks and tuition waivers. Parents work in the preschool as do other members of the community, including senior and junior high school students, and senior citizens. Paraprofessionals come from the community for the most part. Preschool classes meet in schools and school cottages, and churches which offer space for preschool centers in return for a nominal rental fee.

The school district provides much in the way of support services for the preschool. Examples of such include general supervision, building space, bus services and administrative services.

These services enrich the program, make it available to greater numbers of children, and greatly reduce the administrative burdens of the head teacher so more time can be spent in direct services to children. (See chart on next page.)

In addition to these benefits to children, it may be helpful to look at how the community and the district benefit from this approach.

TUITION CONTRIBUTES

1. Salaries
   - Head Teachers
   - Teacher Assistants
2. Materials
3. Equipment
4. Snacks
5. Tuition Waivers
6. Program Development
7. Inservice Specific to the Program

SCHOOL DISTRICT CONTRIBUTES

1. Supervision by Principals and Area Superintendents
2. Program Development
3. Professional Library Facilit/
4. Building Space
5. Bus Services
6. Central Supporting Services
7. Audio Visual Equipment and Materials
8. Evaluation Services
9. General Inservice Classes

BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

Parents and children begin the formal educational process on a note of cooperation and mutual respect between the home and the public school.

Children are involved in an educational experience that insures a smooth transition from preschool to kindergarten because of the program planning functions of the school district. The kindergarten program builds on and expands the preschool program.

The school district makes available its curriculum materials and its expertise to other early childhood programs in the community.

The school district is responsible for meeting the state requirements in the areas of safety and health.

BENEFITS TO THE SCHOOL DISTRICT

The preschool program is largely self-supporting, and doesn't require a large district allocation. Since most of the support services are provided for all district programs, inclusion of the preschool involves a minimal cost.

Parents, through their close involvement with the preschool, become more knowledgable about the district goals. This understanding can lead to continued parent interest and involvement, and can help avoid misunderstandings about the district programs.

The early screening program identifies children with potential learning problems, and early intervention efforts help to lighten the load of children needing special services in elementary school.

THE EARLY CHILDHOOD STAFF

Differentiated staffing, combined with effective communication and ongoing cooperation, is a key component of the program.

THE PRESCHOOL STAFF

Differentiated staffing is a key component of this program, enabling large numbers of children to experience a preschool program while keeping costs to the family at a moderate level. The basic staffing patterns are described below. An effort has been made to highlight the unique contributions and prime responsibilities at each level, but each center exercises a degree of autonomy within this framework so that staff talents can best be matched to center needs. Within the center, communication and cooperation are emphasized, with staff members working together to carry out the daily routine.

EARLY CHILDHOOD COORDINATOR

Most important is provision for overall supervision. If a program consists of one or two centers, central coordination is not that necessary, but as the program grows, a coordinator becomes essential for maintaining efficiency, continuity and high standards. The coordinator serves as a magnet for questions, concerns, needs, problems, and ideas related to early childhood. In this role, the coordinator is able to be both a troubleshooter and an innovator, freeing the teachers in the centers to spend their time in direct services to children and parents. This person serves as a strong liaison between the program-in-action and the administrative staff and can keep the Board of Education well-informed about the program and its needs.

In addition, in a large program, it is desirable for the coordinator to have an assistant to take responsibility for specific portions of the program such as inservice training. Area superintendents and school principals can offer valuable supervisory services.

HEAD TEACHER

The head teacher is responsible for carrying out the program in the center. With a full staff of paraprofessionals and volunteers, the head teacher fulfills a dynamic supervisory role, dealing with program, administrative concerns, center staff development and parent education. Although the head teacher does plan and provide for the experiences of the children in the center, he does not spend all of his time in direct contact with children. Many head teachers spend more than 50% of their time in planning for and working with parents.

Head teachers are contract teachers, and hold Colorado teaching certificates, with emphasis on early childhood.

TEACHER ASSISTANTS

The program confirms its belief that well-trained and well-supervised paraprofessionals can fulfill important roles, by assigning the following responsibilities to the teacher assistants:

Implementation of the daily program with one or more groups of children (approximately 10 per group)

Early screening of preschool children, through administration of the Denver Developmental Screening Test and Vision and Hearing Tests

Home visits with all preschool families twice a year and ongoing visits where a need is seen or expressed

Teachers assistants must have a minimum of 6 quarter hours of college credit in early childhood education, though one strength of the program lies in the fact that more than 60% of the teacher assistants have two years or more of college education.

PARENT AIDES

Each center can grant tuition waivers to families in need. In most cases, mothers work for the preschool in exchange for the waivers. They are an important part of the center staff and fulfill the following roles:

Supervising children on the bus

Helping with clerical services

Helping with supervision of children in large play areas, both indoor and out

Helping set up materials, equipment and snacks

Working with small groups or individuals in learning activities

Helping with clean-up

Each center utilizes its parent aides in ways which best meet its own needs. The important thing is that these parents provide consistent help and become vital to the implementation of the program.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS

Each family is required to spend two or four days a year at the preschool center. The head teacher sets up the parent volunteer program in his own way. Volunteers will hopefully benefit from the work experience by learning new techniques for working with their children, and observing their own child in a group setting, while providing assistance to the center staff. Whatever the parent is asked to do, the staff must communicate to the parent that his contribution is valued and is an essential part of the program.

WHO WORKS AT

Parents

18

Professional and Paraprofessional Staff

14

Student Aides

Community Aides

15

STUDENT AIDES

Several centers have student volunteers who work in the centers on a regular basis. Again, each center sets up its program to meet its individual needs. The emphasis of the student experience is on observation, working with children, or helping with planning and materials. Among the benefits to students is learning how to handle young children. Hopefully, this will carry over into their behavior when they become parents, as well as help them to decide whether they should pursue a career in early childhood education.

KINDERGARTEN STAFF

The kindergarten staff is organized along more traditional lines, with a certified teacher responsible for one or two groups of kindergarten children. The teacher is assisted by a full-time aide, and is supervised by the building principal. The Early Childhood Coordinator, assisted by a half time resource teacher, provides leadership in program development and adoption and inservice training, and makes available supervisory and administrative aid when necessary.

Parents are encouraged to volunteer as classroom aides, and are becoming an increasingly more important part of the kindergarten program.

INSERVICE TRAINING

In order to make a differentiated staffing plan work, training and preparation must be built into every level. Through an extensive inservice program, all staff members from head teachers to volunteers participate in inservice sessions throughout the year. We have found the following to be particularly important to the implementation of our program.

REQUIRED INSERVICE

Topic	Hours	Participants
Denver Developmental Screening Test Training (DDST)	10	Head Teachers Teacher Assistants
Yearly Review of DDST	2	Head Teachers and Teacher Assistants
Home Visiting	6	Some Head Teachers Teacher Assistants
Group Discussion Techniques	10	Head Teachers
Orientation	10	Teacher Assistants
Orientation	variable	Students
Orientation	variable	Parent Volunteers
Vision and Hearing Screening	4	Head Teachers and Teacher Assistants

ELECTIVE INSERVICE

This is a sampling of the inservice topics the school district has offered to head teachers, teacher assistants and other interested persons the last few years:

New Techniques in Motor and Aesthetic Development

New Techniques and Ideas in Creative Arts

Child Abuse: Understanding and Identifying It

The Special Child in the Regular Classroom

Identifying and Helping Children with Special Problems

Learning Centers Workshop

Pertinent Issues in Early Childhood Education

There are no preschool classes on Fridays. This time is generally used by each center for planning the center's program, and is often reserved for in-service for teacher assistants and parents.

THE PARENT INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM

The Parent Involvement Program is built on the belief, that parents are the child's first and most effective teacher.

THE PARENT INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM

Just as the early childhood program recognizes the individuality of the child by providing a variety of instructional strategies and materials, the parent involvement program recognizes the fact that parents also are individuals. It is unrealistic to expect all parents to want or need the same experiences and information. The mother who is seeing her third child through the program is ready for different experiences than the one whose first child is just beginning preschool. Mothers who may spend many hours each day with young children need different opportunities than fathers, whose contact with young children may be limited. Parents of children with special needs may require different techniques than those whose children do not present specific problems. In order to begin to meet individual needs, a variety of approaches for bringing parents and the school into partnership are built into the program. The following are the components of the parent involvement program:

Parent attendance at school sessions

Parent discussion groups

Parent meetings

Home visits

Parent advisory boards

Center libraries

These provide opportunities for the school and parents to interact through large group, small group, and individual activities which meet both general needs and individual needs. Through this varied program of parent involvement activities, the parent can hopefully be better prepared and more effective as his child's primary teacher. As the parents participate in school activities, this involvement becomes the foundation for the close home-school relationship that is so vital for the child's success in school.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS

As mentioned before, in the preschool each family agrees to work at two or four school sessions during the year. These visits to the preschool help the parents to understand the program, allow them to see their child in a group setting, learn new techniques for working with children, and lend valuable assistance to the daily program.

In the kindergarten, parents are encouraged to volunteer time in the classroom in order to experience the same kinds of benefits as preschool parents do.

Careful and pertinent orientation of parents is a prerequisite for an effective parent volunteer program.

GENERAL ORIENTATION

At the beginning of the school year, parents are introduced to the early childhood program and to their roles in it. Most effective is a schedule of small group meetings so that parents have ample opportunity to ask questions about the program. The following topics are important to cover:

The goals of the early childhood program and how they will be met

The curriculum

What parents can do when they work at the school:[6]

1. Observation of their child - what to look at and what to look for.
2. Teaching individuals how to use instructional packets.
3. Helping in large group activities.
   Supervision
   Modeling behavior for children

4. Preparing materials and equipment
5. Arranging instructional materials
6. Storytelling
7. Sharing special skills and talents
8. Meeting the needs of children as they arise, such as helping with coats and boots on a snowy day.

Child management in the early childhood classroom.

1. How to talk to children
2. How to handle difficult situations

Signing up to work.

The initial orientation meeting is a good time to pass around a calendar and have parents choose the days they want to work. A mother can be recruited to call those who did not attend and arrange work days with them. Many teachers feel it is very advantageous to have parents work one day early in the year and one day late in the year. Then parents can see the changes that have occurred through the year.

MONTHLY ORIENTATION

The parents who have signed up to work for the next month are expected to attend a planning session to prepare them for their experience. Topics to cover include the following:

The specific plans for the month, including themes, activities, and materials to be used.

A review of child management techniques.

Specific jobs that parents can do during this month.

Special contributions parents might be able to make this month.

WEEKLY ORIENTATION

Some teachers prefer to hold an orientation session each week for the next week's volunteers.

DAILY ORIENTATION

Another alternative for orientation is the daily briefing. This does not replace the general orientation meeting, but can either replace or supplement weekly or monthly sessions.

As parents arrive, the head teacher takes ten or fifteen minutes to talk to them. These sessions can help the teacher to tailor the day's experience to the parents' needs. He may discuss what kinds of activities are going on that day, where materials are, and child management techniques. Often the teacher assistant or aide can help by assigning specific tasks to parents.

When planning for parent volunteers, it is important to keep in mind the goals of the parent involvement program, and to remember that parents differ in their interests and needs. For some, observation may be the proper focus of the volunteer session. For others, individual instruction may be the best activity. When working with parents, it is wise to attempt to put the idea of partnership into practice by giving parents choices of jobs to do and by utilizing their unique assets as fully as possible.

The parent work program is primarily an educational one, exposing parents to techniques and ideas that they can use and helping parents to step back and see how their child functions in a group setting. To emphasize this, the teacher can set aside five minutes at the end of the session to talk to the parents about what they saw, to answer questions about what went on, and to clarify any misconceptions they may have. This brief evaluation session can play a big part in giving meaning to the work experience.

ACTIVITY PACKETS AND INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

If parents are going to be involved in instruction, it is very helpful to have materials prepared for them, so that a minimum of explanation to the parent is needed. Activity packets are a way of accomplishing this.[7] Each packet contains the following:

All materials for a learning activity for one or two children.

Directions to the parent for using the packet.

Description of the skill or concept to be taught by means of the activity.

A teacher can then provide a parent with a list of children, their individual needs, and appropriate activities for those children. With minimal directions, the parent can begin teaching, using material matched to the child's needs.

PARENT DISCUSSION GROUPS

The parent discussion group technique is particularly responsive to the needs of parents, as they perceive them. Groups of ten to fifteen parents meet with the head teacher for four or five sessions, and the agenda consists of the parents' concerns and questions. The group discussion method involves parents in an educational experience which hopefully will help them to

> "....function more effectively in their parental role. It introduces new educational experiences that will give parents added knowledge and understanding, cause them to question their habitual ways of thinking, feeling and acting, and help them develop new methods (where new methods are indicated) of dealing with their children, with themselves, and with their social environment. Thus educational intervention can often be a step toward a more effective way of life." [8]

The group serves an informational function, helping parents become more familiar with the basic concepts of child growth and development, and an emotional function, giving the parents a chance to identify and understand their own feelings. The group builds on the parents' strengths and helps them change through the experience of guided group discussion.

The teachers receive inservice training in the Child Study Association of America group discussion method. The training includes gaining an understanding of the basic principles of the group discussion method, and acquiring the techniques to carry out these principles. The teacher learns to function as a facilitator, guiding the discussion rather than leading it, addressing parent concerns rather than his own. Although the parents initiate the content of the meetings, the leader guides the discussion so that parents touch upon many aspects of child development and family relations. He also reinforces particularly significant concepts, adds information when

appropriate, and offers interpretations when necessary.

Teachers have worked out a variety of schedules for their parent discussion groups. Some are as follows:

Discussion groups held early in the school year are well attended. Parents are interested in finding out about the preschool program and in meeting the teacher, and this motivates them to attend.

Discussion groups are often held in the second half of the year. The initial flurry of activity is over and many parents welcome a chance to focus in on the child himself, rather than the preschool.

Most centers offer discussion groups in both morning and afternoon sessions, so that parents can attend while the child is in school. Evening sessions are planned so that fathers and working mothers can attend. Occasionally a Saturday group can be scheduled if the community desires it.

Babysitting is provided at daytime meetings. Parents volunteer to do the sitting so that there need be no charge for the service.

The discussion group meetings provide the teacher with opportunities to expand the parent education program. These are not meant to supplant the discussion groups but to enhance their usefulness. Suggestions are:

Meeting can begin with a brief overview of the week's activities in the preschool.

Short film strips or films dealing with the topics under discussion can be shown.

A list of good ideas and helpful approaches to problems can be compiled for each session.

An attractive display of pertinent books and articles from the center library will encourage parents to explore topics in more detail.

Teachers can prepare handouts which provide additional information or summarize current thinking about a topic.

Teachers and parents both feel that discussion groups are extremely valuable. It helps parents deal with their anxieties about parenting and to find out that other parents have problems too. They can begin to develop a greater degree of realism about their children. It helps them choose appropriate solutions to specific problems they are facing. It also helps them understand the preschool program and adds meaning to their work experiences at the school.

PARENT MEETINGS

Large group meetings serve as a good complement to the smaller discussion groups. Each preschool center holds a number of large group meetings throughout the year and topics express the interests and needs of each center community. Kindergarten parents are usually included in general parent meetings held at the school, but can also benefit from meetings planned especially for them.

Topics for programs can be selected in several ways:

Many times ideas and concerns are generated by parents in discussion groups and time doesn't permit full discussion of them. These can give the head teacher an idea of what the parents might like to know more about.

A parent committee can be formed to offer suggestions for meeting topics.

The school district or the community can be tapped when looking for interesting speakers. People in the fields of child psychology, medicine, social work, nutrition and recreation can often present programs of interest to parents of young children.

Films, filmstrips and video tapes can supplement a speaker or a discussion.

Parents or staff members may have special knowledge or talents which could be used in a parent meeting.

A preschool can join with a nearby elementary school for programs of interest to both. Kindergarten and preschool can plan joint early childhood parent meetings

A list of particularly valuable parent programs follows:

How Young Children Learn

Back To School Programs

Many parents enjoy the opportunity to visit the school and try out some of the activities. Most of the centers hold some kind of Back To School Program, and several of the programs are particularly innovative. Examples follow:

Show Daddy Night

Video tapes of the school session are shown, and activities are set up so that dads can participate in them.

Dad's Saturday

A regular preschool session is held on a Saturday so that dads can participate in the experience.

Bring a Parent Night

Children and parents come back to school together to participate in school activities.

Educational Alternatives

What programs in the district await young children?

Activities Workshop

A session of learning how to do interesting and educational activities with children. The program may be organized around a theme such as holiday projects or summer activities.

Programs dealing with speech development, learning disabilities and child management are popular with parents.

Parent meetings are scheduled in the same way as discussion groups, at different times of the day and on different days of the week, so that parents can choose a convenient meeting time. Babysitting is provided for daytime meetings.

HOME VISITS

Every preschool family receives two home visits during the school year. Home visiting is not a mandatory component of the kindergarten program, but is a recommended technique for achieving the goals of the parent involvement program. Thus the rationale for the visits and the suggested techniques for home visitors are applicable to both levels of the Early Childhood Program.

In the preschool program, the teacher assistant visits the home of the children for whom she is responsible in the center. The first visit is made at the beginning of the year. There are several purposes for this visit.

It is a friendly contact with the family which hopefully makes visiting the preschool, conferencing with teachers, and asking questions easier for the parents.

The teacher assistant can explain the goals and purposes for the preschool program.

The Denver Developmental Screening Test is administered. This is a screening instrument which points up any developmental lags a child may have. When it is given in the home, it becomes a nonthreatening experience for both the parents and the child. The results of this early screening are used to plan the best instructional program for the child.

An informal visit to the home helps the teacher assistant to better understand the background of each child, so that the most effective program for that child can be implemented.

The second home visit occurs at the end of the school year and allows the parent and teacher assistant to discuss the child's progress over the year. This conference is usually held in the home because

the home setting emphasizes the attitude of home-school partnership which the program attempts to foster. The conference is not only an evaluation of the child's progress but is a discussion of the changes observed by both the parents and the teacher assistants. In addition to these two visits, interim visits are arranged for families who would benefit from them. There are several reasons why these visits might be made.

If the Denver Developmental Screening Test or classroom observation indicate developmental lags, visits may be scheduled to help the parents carry out learning activities at home. The focus is often on making inexpensive materials and using them effectively in learning activities. Sometimes the home visitor may take a special toy or game to achieve the same purpose.

Children who show evidence of a problem at the preschool often benefit from home visits. For example, the very shy child often becomes more comfortable at school after a visit. The teacher assistant may learn a great deal about the child and his family on a home visit and thus be able to plan more appropriately for him.

Home visits can meet the needs of parents who are lonely or isolated. The visit itself is important to these parents. It also allows the teacher assistant to inform the family about community resources. Often a teacher assistant is able to encourage contact with other preschool families.

Some head teachers extend the opportunity to receive ongoing home visits to all of the families at their center, so that visits are made not only to families that the school perceives as needing them, but also to families who perceive themselves as benefiting from the visits.

If the home visit is to help operationalize the program goals, the visitor must make every effort to make the visit a positive, comfortable experience for all involved. Several ways he may do this are as follows:

When scheduling visits, take the family needs into consideration. Be sure the time is convenient. If the child is the reason for the visit, schedule it at a time when he will be alert and well-rested. If both parents want to be present be sure to schedule a time convenient to both.

Credibility as a teacher and as a helpful representative of the school is enhanced by being prompt and reliable. If unable to keep an appointment, be sure to call and arrange another time.

Be prepared for the visit. If planned ahead of time, the visit will go smoothly. The following are important to have in mind before a visit:

What is the reason for the visit?

-to help the parent acquire new teaching skills?
-to draw out the shy child?
-to find out more about an observed problem?

How can the goals for the visit be achieved?

-what activities would be appropriate?
-what kind of information do you want to acquire?

Be positive:

-emphasize the strengths you find in the child or parent.
-make constructive suggestions rather than giving dogmatic advice.
-strive for a feeling of cooperation and mutual concern.

Be honest and approach problems tactfully and directly.

Be alert to the parents' and children's needs. This may mean modifying your plans for the visit, or scheduling further visits to meet these needs.

Aim for the goal that each home visit results in the parents feeling more competent and positive.

There are several Play Materials Lending Libraries placed in centrally located centers which augment the home visitation program. They contain toys and materials which have been chosen to meet needs in development as pointed out by the DDST. Often a teacher assistant will take along a toy or activity on a follow-up visit. This helps to focus attention on the child and his needs, and gives the parent the techniques for teaching the child at home. Parents can also go to the Lending Library and check out materials.

While it is the teacher assistant who is responsible for the home visiting program, the head teacher is always available to help implement it and will often go along when particularly difficult problems arise.

PARENT ADVISORY BOARDS

The parent advisory board is yet another avenue for parent involvement. While not a policy making group, the board can carry out the following functions:

It can communicate the concerns and suggestions of the parents to the head teachers and the Early Childhood Education Coordinator.

It can help support the program in material ways such as making equipment, and in less tangible ways such as serving as an advocate for the program goals in the community.

It can serve as a sounding board for new policies and programs.

The Advisory Board can have important benefits for parents as well as for the program.

It opens up a delineated channel of communication for the parents. If a parent is reluctant to express a criticism or concern to a teacher or the coordinator, he can go through the advisory board members.

When an advisory board organizes around projects, it can bring many parents into direct involvement with the preschool and provide valuable support for the program. Parents, rather than teachers, can begin to actively promote the participation and involvement the program desires.

It educates the parents about positive ways to influence the school district. Hopefully, parents who begin their relationship with the school in this way, will continue to show concern, offer suggestions and provide support for the total school program.

THE CENTER PARENT ADVISORY GROUP

When organizing a parent advisory group at the preschool center, the following suggestions may be helpful:

While membership on the advisory should be open to all, it may be beneficial to invite some parents to serve who are particularly interested in the preschool and well informed about parent concerns. They can form a vigorous nucleus from which an effective board can be built.

Make the communication channels clear. Be sure the parents know who the board members are and how to contact them. For many parents, it may be easier to express concerns to another parent than to the staff.

While the head teacher may have to give a great deal of direction and support at first, he should be prepared to step back when the group is well established.

Encourage the advisory group members to become involved with similar groups at the elementary school, area and district level. In this way, they serve as spokesmen for the program and become familiar with concerns they will face as their children progress through the school system.

THE COUNTY PRESCHOOL ADVISORY BOARD

The County Advisory Board has the same basic purposes as the Center Board, which are involving parents, facilitating communications, and supporting the program. Each center should be strongly encouraged to send at least one representative to the County Advisory Board. In order to have a strong, vital advisory board, the following may be useful:

If possible, the County Board should be organized around action projects. This gives a concrete reason for the board's existence and keeps moti-

vation and interest high. Projects may include the following:

Helping to organize advisories in centers that do not have them.

Presenting the preschool goals and program to other groups within the district such as the school board or elementary school personnel.

Making available information about the preschool to the community.

The agenda for the advisory should come from the parents as much as possible. While direction and support from the preschool staff may be needed at first, the parents should be encouraged to provide the direction as soon as possible.

The kindergarten parents should be encouraged to join the advisory boards at the elementary school, and also encouraged to give input to area and district advisory boards as well.

NEWSLETTERS

Weekly or monthly newsletters keep parents informed about the preschool. The following topics can be included:

School plans for the month

Home activities to supplement the school program

Recipes for cooking with children

Upcoming events in the community of interest to young children and to parents of young children

Notice of parent meetings and discussion group meetings

Health, safety and nutrition information

Requests for parent help in making materials, decorating the classroom, building playgrounds, donating junk, etc.

A message from the teacher

PRINTED MATERIALS

From time to time teachers duplicate articles about topics of interest and distribute them to parents. Popular magazines, educational journals, newspaper articles and books can serve as sources for these handouts. Some examples follow:

The Four and Five Year Old

Basic Principles in Dealing with Children

Eight Important Things Children Learn from Play

The Parent Involvement Program provides many opportunities for getting parents involved with the school. Teachers use a variety of techniques to enhance the program and to be in touch with parents. Successful implementation of a parent involvement program depends upon several things:

A clear understanding of the benefits of the parent involvement program to parents and children and the school.

A staff that is committed to the concept of individualization for parents as well as for children, so that the program can be effective with many parents with different needs.

A fund of ideas about how to involve parents.

We hope that this handbook will provide the basic information needed to implement a parent involvement program and that this information, combined with an open attitude and an innovative approach, will enable teachers and parents to form a true partnership in the school.

SUGGESTED MATERIALS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION CENTER LIBRARIES

Each preschool center has received a basic library of materials of interest to parents. In addition, centers add to their libraries out of their own budgets. In addition to books and pamphlets, pertinent magazine articles and teacher prepared handouts are included. Parents are welcome to check out materials at any time.

Suggested library materials are as follows:

Away from Bedlam. DHEW Publication (OCD) 73-1029, Washington, D. C.

Badger, Earladeen D., Mother's Guide to Early Learning. McGraw-Hill Early Learning, Paoli, Pa.: 1973

Fraiberg, Selma H., The Magic Years. Charles Scribner's Sons, N. Y.: 1959

Ginott, Haim, Between Parent and Child. Macmillan, N. Y.: 1965

Gordon, Thomas, Parent Effectiveness Training. Peter Wyden, N. Y.: 1970

Gregg, Elizabeth and members of Boston Children's Medical Center, What to Do When "There's Nothing to Do". Dell Publishing Company, Inc.,N. Y.: 1968

Jerome Study Group, Montessori in the Home. 2nd edition, Elad Press, Garrett Park, Md.: 1963

Lorton, Mary B., Workjobs for Parents. Addison Wesley Publishing Company, Menlo Park, Ca.: 1972

Marzollo, Jean and Janice Lloyd, Learning Through Play. Harper and Row, N.Y.: 1972

More than a Teacher. DHEW Publication (OCD) 73-1027, Washington, D.C.

Patterson, Gerald R. and M. Elizabeth Gullion, Living With Children. Research Press, Champaign, Il.: 1968

Public Affairs Pamphlets, Public Affairs Committee, 381 Park Avenue South, N.Y., 10016
There are numerous titles available. Some we have used are, What Can You Do About Quarreling?, How to Discipline Your Children, Talking it over at Home, The Shy Child.

Preparing for Change. DHEW Publication (OCD) 73-1028, Washington, D. C.

Rosenberg, Edward and Silas Warner, A Doctor Discusses The Preschool Child's Learning Process, (and How Parents Can Help). Budlong Press Company, Chicago, Ill.: 1969

Sharp, Evelyn, Thinking is Child's Play. Dutton, N.Y.: 1969

Smith, Judith M. and Donald E. P. Smith, Child Management. Ann Arbor Publishers, Ann Arbor, Mi.: 1964

Staff of Developmental Language and Speech Center, Teach Your Child to Talk. Standard Publishing Company, N. Y.

The Vulnerable Child. DHEW Publication (OCD) 73-1030, Washington, D. C.

Ways Children Learn. DHEW (OCD) 73-1026, Washington, D. C.

MATERIALS THAT MAY BE USEFUL
TO THE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION STAFF

BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS

Auerbach, Aline B., Parents Learn Through Discussion: Principles and Practices of Parent Group Education. John Wiley and Sons, Inc., N.Y.: 1968

Baker, Katherine Read, Ideas that Work with Young Children. NAEYC, Washington, D. C.: 1972
This collection of articles from Young Children Magazine includes sections on working with parents and areas of special challenge to adults working with young children.

Bronfenbrenner, Urie. Report on Longitudinal Evaluations of Preschool Programs Vol. II, Is Early Intervention Effective? DHEW Publication (OHD) 74-25

Cole, Ann, Carolyn Haas, Elizabeth Heller, and Betty Weinberger, Recipes for Fun. PAR Project, 464 Central Avenue, Northfield, Il., 60093: 1972
More Recipes for Fun. PAR Project, 464 Central Avenue, Northfield, Il., 60093: 1972
An excellent resource for parents. The books include many ideas for inexpensive and easily made play materials and suggestions for using them. This could be a useful book to take along on a home visit.

Early Childhood Program, First Level. Jefferson County Schools, Lakewood, Co.: 1975.
This is the curriculum guide for three and four year olds.

Frankenburg, William, Joseph B. Dodds and Alma W. Fandal, Denver Developmental Screening Test Manual. revised edition, University of Colorado Medical Center: 1973
This manual is used for inservice training of teacher assistants.

Hedges, Henry G., Volunteer Parental Assistance in Elementary Schools. The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Niagara Centre, 28 Prince St., St. Catherines, Ontario: 1972
This is one of a number of printed materials which combines empirical data and good suggestions for setting up a parent volunteer program. All are appropriate for preschool as well as elementary school.

Hodgden, Laurel, et al, School Before Six: A Diagnostic Approach. 2 volumes revised edition, CEMREL Institute, St. Louis, Mo.: 1974

Lorton, Mary B., Work Jobs. Addison Wesley Publishing Company, Menlo Park, Ca.: 1975
This is an extensive collection of easily prepared materials and activities for use by individual children in preschool classrooms. Areas for which activities are given include perception, matching, classification, sounds and letters, sets, number sequences combining and separating groups and relationships. These are materials that parents can make and use at home and in the preschool.

Play. DHEW Publication #SRS-CSA-182-1971.
This booklet has been a good gift for parents for the home visitor to take. It includes short readings on play, recipes for art materials, suggestions for activities and a list of good books for preschoolers.

AUDIO-VISUAL AIDS

Foundations of Reading and Writing. 16MM color film, Campus Films, 2 Overhill Road, Scarsdale, N. Y., 10583: 1975

The Growing Years in Sight and Sound. Childcraft Education Corp., 20 Kilmer Rd., Edison, N. Y. 80017
Eighteen film and sound cassettes for use with the Courier 16, a portable projector which synchronizes an audio presentation with a visual present-

tation on a T.V. sized screen.

How an Average Child Behaves, Ages 1 through 5.
Parents' Magazine Films, Inc., 52 Vanderbilt Ave., N. Y. 10017
This set contains 5 film strips (one for each age level), a reading booklet for each filmstrip, and a discussion guide.

Understanding Early Childhood, Ages 1 through 6.
"The Child's Relationship with the Family", "The Child's Point of View", "The Development of Feelings in Children", "Preparing the Child for Learning". Parents' Magazine Films, Inc., 52 Vanderbilt Ave., N. Y. 10017
Each set contains 5 color filmstrips, 5 audio-script booklets, 1 L.P. record or 3 cassettes.

OTHER SOURCES

ERIC - ECE Publications Office, College of Education, University of Illinois, 805 W. Pennsylvania Avenue, Urbana, Il.
ERIC has copies of recent articles, documents, reports, etc. available in print or microfiche, as well as original papers and bibliographies.

NAEYC - 1834 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington, D. C. 20009.
NAEYC publishes many pamphlets and books at a modest price, as well as the journal, Young Children.

Office of Child Development, DHEW, Washington D. C.
The Office of Child Development has a publications list available.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Bronfenbrenner, Urie, A Report on Longitudinal Evaluations of Preschool Programs Volume II, Is Early Intervention Effective? U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, DHEW Publication No. (OHD) 74-25, Washington, D.C., p. 55.

[2]Ibid., p. 41

[3]Ibid., P. 56

[4]The curriculum guide, Early Childhood Program, First Level, is available from the Jefferson County School District, 1209 Quail Street, Lakewood, CO 80215: 1975

[5]For a more comprehensive description of the specific roles and responsibilities of staff members, see Early Childhood Education Handbook, Jefferson County Public Schools, Lakewood, CO 80215: 1975

[6]The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Niagara Center has a six page list of roles that parents can fill in the classroom.

[7]See Workjobs and School Before Six for suggestions for activity packets.

[8]Auerbach, Aline B., Parents Learn Through Discussion: Principles and Practices of Parent Group Education. John Wiley and Sons, Inc., New York: 1968